

Partners at the Interface: What Works and What Doesn't

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Session Topics

- Partnership Life Cycle
- Partnership Assessment...
 - Leadership
 - Trust
 - Learning
 - Managing for Performance

Partnership Life Cycle

Generally accepted stages of partnership development and characteristics:

- FORMING
- FRUSTRATION
- FUNCTIONAL
- FLYING

Stage 1: FORMING

- Common cause
- Early enthusiasm
- What's possible
- Unclear commitments

FORMING: Tactics to Employ

- Focus on a common vision
- Relationships
- Tangible outcomes
- Partnership agenda
- Neutral meeting ground

Stage 2: **FRUSTRATION**

- Competition for credit or control
- Hidden agendas
- Purpose of partnership unclear
- Unclear about priorities and methods
- Doubts about resources
- Confusion

FRUSTRATION: Tactics to Employ

- Redefine commonalities – vision, purpose
- Involvement
- Small, tangible goals-quick successes
- Open expression and constructive disagreement
- Benefits
- Appreciation of individual contributions
- Fix the problem, not the blame

Stage 3: **FUNCTIONING**

- Renewed vision
- Joint project progress
- “Me,” “me,” “me” becomes “we”
- Responsibilities, roles are clear
- Full accountability

FUNCTIONING: Tactics to Employ

- Principles/protocols for collaboration
- Shared leadership and accountability
- Common methods and quality standards
- Clear objectives, responsibilities
- Milestones, success measures
- Seek learning consciously

Stage 4: FLYING

- Successful achievement of partnership goals
- Shared leadership
- Commitment of partnership goals
- Partnership priorities central

FLYING: Tactics To Employ

- Building partnership capacity
- Group assessment
- Improve communications
- Efficiency
- Ask: does partnership still serve its purpose?
- Partner benefits realized
- Celebrate success

Stage 5: FAILING

- Disengagement
- Lack of commitment
- Recurrent tensions
- Breakdown of relationships

Go back to Stage 1?

PARTNERSHIP ASSESSMENT

- Leadership
- Trust
- Learning
- Managing for Performance

LEADERSHIP

...where partners share a vision and harness their energies to achieve more than they could on their own

LEADERSHIP Benchmarks

- Common vision
- Partnership added value
- Willing to make changes
- Partners facilitate partnership working
- Alignment of objectives

LEADERSHIP Issues

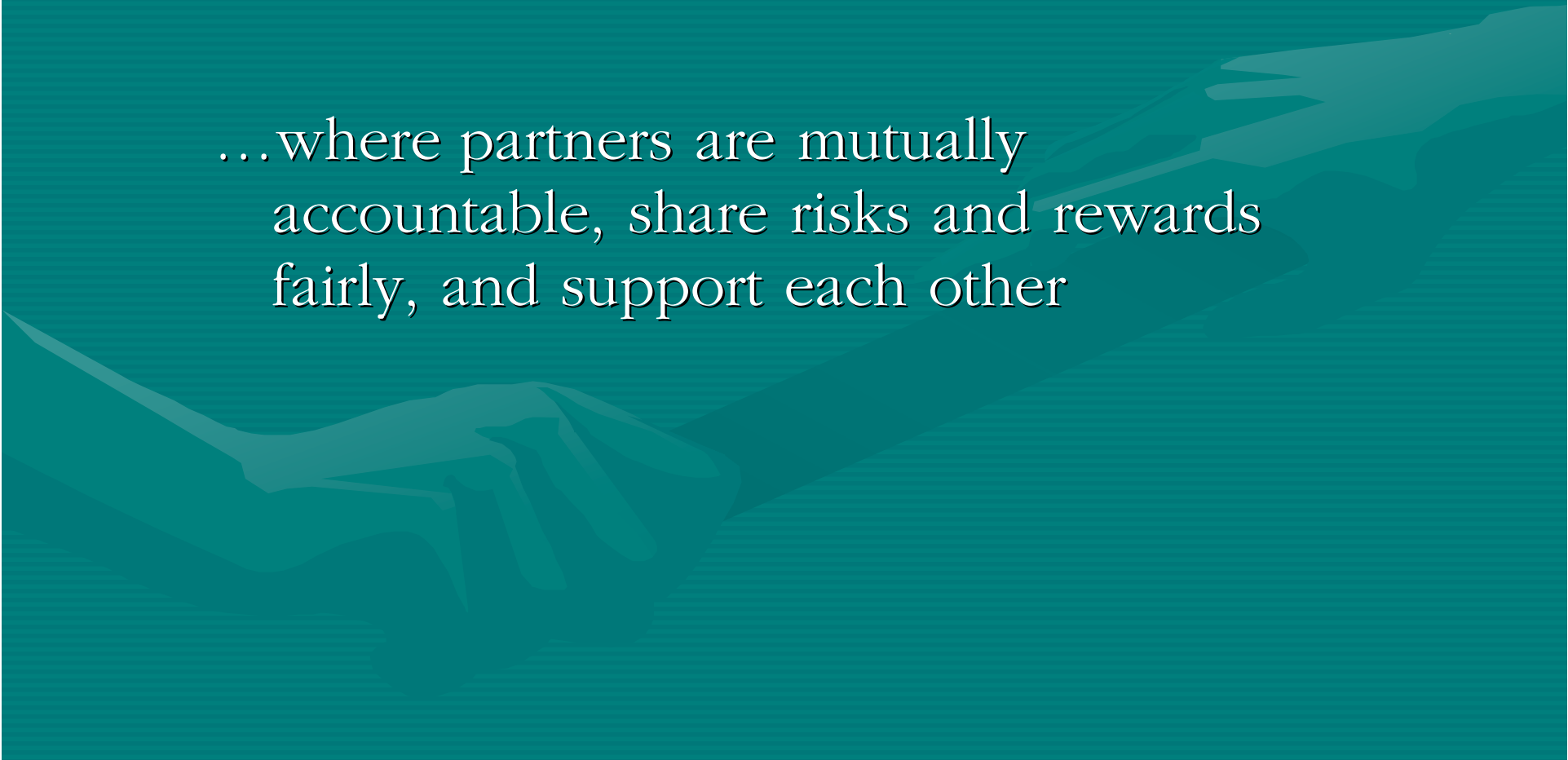
- Limited vision
- Failure to inspire, push the bounds of the possible
- Resources not devoted to priorities
- Reactive versus proactive
- Pursuit of quick fixes
- Competition for lead

Possible Actions

- Focus on the medium to long term, not quick fixes
- Clarify partnership added value
- Identify ways of minimizing costs and risks of partnerships
- Promote wider understanding of purpose and benefits of partnership
- Encourage bottom-up contributions

TRUST

...where partners are mutually accountable, share risks and rewards fairly, and support each other



TRUST Benchmarks

- Mutually accountable
- Respect differences
- Deal with conflict
- Sufficient, effective communications
- Sharing of contributions, risks and rewards
- Equal say in decision-making

TRUST Issues

- Overly focused on formal procedures
- Failure to listen, engage in genuine dialogue
- Inordinate time spent in meetings
- “exclusive behavior”
- Stereotyping/judgmental behavior
- Defensive behavior
- Culture of blame/criticizing partners

Possible Actions

- Organize regular reporting and review sessions
- Create opportunities for practical involvement
- Introduce ground rules
- Focus on common agenda
- Check – are partners gaining benefits?

LEARNING

...where partners continuously seek improvements in activities and ways of working

LEARNING Benchmarks

- Continuously seek improvements
- Periodically review partnership
- Seek to learn
- Use strengths and talents
- Manage the changes

LEARNING Issues

- “Solutions in search of problems”
- Acceptance of “lowest common denominator” solutions
- Need to develop leadership capabilities
- Groupthink
- Ivory tower decision makers
- Aversion to risk-taking

Possible Actions

- Promote, support, evaluate pilot projects
- Facilitate learning labs
- Set baselines for assessing progress
- Encourage experimentation
- Partners set out what they have to offer
- Model new ways to doing things
- Celebrate what has been achieved

MANAGING FOR PERFORMANCE

...where partners put in place
necessary practices and resources,
and manage effectively the
changes needed

MANAGING FOR PERFORMANCE

Benchmarks

- Structure fits its purpose
- Clearly defined and accepted roles, responsibilities and contributions
- Adequate resources
- Appropriate project management and co-ordination methods

MANAGING FOR PERFORMANCE

Issues

- Expectation of gain without pain
- Lack of accountability
- Poorly specified/set objectives
- Failure to recognize partnership stages
- Failure to review partnership activities

Possible Actions

- Review structure against criteria for partnership effectiveness
- Define partner roles and responsibilities
- Involve all partners in strategy development and review
- Involve new partners
- Agree on project charters and joint plans

PARTING THOUGHTS

- Partnerships need to work through the stages of the life cycle in order to function with the greatest effectiveness (or “fly”).
- Even in the best of partnerships, there is a tendency for partnerships to falter
- Partners must consciously manage their progress through critical stages of the life cycle